



BLM News



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For Immediate Release:

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BLM Shifts Planning Efforts in Southwestern Utah

St. George-Cedar City, Utah - BLM announced today that a decision has been made by agency officials to reallocate funding supporting the St. George OHV Plan Amendment to higher priority land use planning efforts (RMPs) well underway in other parts of the state. This action would defer some of the work on the St. George OHV Plan for off-highway vehicle designations on public lands in Washington County.

St. George BLM Manager Jim Crisp said: "BLM deeply regrets this change and understands the ramifications of deferring work on the St. George amendment, but has no alternative given funding shortfalls being experienced this year and anticipated in FY 2006. BLM will extend the scoping period for the plan amendment indefinitely until it can be determined when funding can be restored to the project. During this time, the St. George Field Office will continue to consult with agencies, local governments, tribes, and interested parties to improve its roads and trails data in anticipation of resuming the plan amendment in the future."

"Comments on planning issues can still be sent to BLM through the mail or by email to stgeorge_ohvplan@blm.gov. We will keep interested parties posted on further developments through planning bulletins, mailings, and/or media releases," said Crisp.

By mid-April, BLM will post an interim report on its Plan website (www.stgeorgeohvplan.com) and at information stations throughout Washington County summarizing information gathered during the scoping period that began on January 1 of this year. Crisp also said BLM will follow up on issues raised during scoping by working with cooperating agencies, tribes, and interested groups in assessing travel routes and refining planning criteria to be used when funds are available to resume the OHV designations.

Reallocation of funds will also delay the start of BLM's Cedar City Field Office RMP affecting public lands in Beaver and Iron Counties. BLM anticipates funding will be restored to allow start up to resume in Fiscal Year 2007. The delay will give the Cedar City Field Office time to further expand important resource data and to continue to work with local governments on understanding social and economic trends in the affected counties. It will also give the field office further opportunities to coordinate travel management plans with the Dixie National Forest and the St. George Field Office.

Cedar City Manager Todd Christensen said, “This delay provides a great opportunity to coordinate and work closely with Beaver and Iron counties, local government, Tribes, groups and interested parties to find common ground and work on the desired future use of the public lands.”

“BLM’s management of the public lands affects the ability of the public to be gainfully employed, enjoy recreational pursuits and find solitude. We understand that people will want opportunities to interact with, and present ideas and concerns to the BLM. The Cedar City Field Office will encourage those contacts as we link our planning effort with those already underway in preparation for the start of the Cedar City RMP,” said Christensen.

The funds currently supporting new land use planning efforts in St. George and Cedar City will be shifted to planning projects already underway in Price, Richfield, Moab and Monticello. The funds are needed to cover additional costs associated with bringing the four higher priority plans to completion. Other land use plans underway in Vernal and Kanab are not affected by the proposal.

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NOTE: For more information:

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